



This Old Column

Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission

February 2004

READY, SET, GROW!

While February's bleak and chilly days seem to endlessly drag on, many people have started to eagerly anticipate the bright, warm days of spring and summer. Each year, with the arrival of spring, IHPC staff receives countless inquiries about landscaping guidelines. Since many people have already begun planning this year's landscaping projects, IHPC staff just wanted to send a friendly reminder of the types of work that requires approval and what does not.

NO CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS REQUIRED:

1. Installation or removal of plant materials (other than trees) on the property of existing buildings, provided (for removal) that it is not required in a previously issued Certificate of Appropriateness.
2. Maintenance, including pruning trees and thinning plants.
3. Removal of trees noted as undesirable in the Preservation Plans or as sited by the Indianapolis Code, Section 30-1, Trees and Flora.
4. Removal of dead trees.
5. Borders on planting beds in a front yard or side lot that are low and inconspicuous (excluding landscape timbers and railroad ties exceeding 2" in height).
6. The following items, when confined to the back yard:
 - a) Borders on planting beds.
 - b) Children's play equipment.
 - c) Dog houses.
 - d) Any additional fencing within a privacy fence.
 - e) Objects of artistic or cultural significance (such as sculpture), not exceeding 6 feet in height.
 - f) Fountains and small decorative pools.
 - g) Barbecue pits.
 - h) Garden furniture.
7. Grading and filling yards consistent with surrounding grades.
8. Patios and decks in back yards with no railings, no elements higher than 18" off the ground and not visible from the street.

STAFF APPROVAL OF A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS:

1. Planting or removal of all trees, except as noted above.
2. Installation or removal of plant materials on vacant or side lots.
3. Storage sheds of less than 144 square feet and in a back yard.
4. Handicap ramps.
5. Small yard accessories not confined to a back yard.

6. Patios and decks with railings, in back yard, not higher than the foundation and not projecting beyond either side of the building.

HEARING OFFICER APPROVAL OF A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS:

1. Decks and patios not confined to the back yard, projecting beyond either side of the building, or higher than the foundation.
2. Earth formations such as berms, hills, or culverts; which are not consistent with surrounding grades (back yards excluded).
3. In- and above-ground swimming pools in back yards.
4. Accessory structures such as large storage sheds, gazebos, greenhouses.
5. Fountains, decorative pools, flagpoles, and large yard accessories not confined to back yards.

COMMISSION APPROVAL OF A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS:

1. Any action deemed inappropriate by Staff or Hearing Officer.
2. Development and landscaping of public or private parks.
3. In- and above-ground swimming pools not confined to a back yard.

If your landscaping project requires approval, please remember that an application must be submitted and approved *before* performing work. Applications can be completed at the IHPC office or via the internet at <http://www.indygov.org/histpres>. If you are unsure whether or not your project requires approval, please contact the IHPC office at 327-4406.